PASTORAL LIFE

A PUBLICATION FOR PRIESTS

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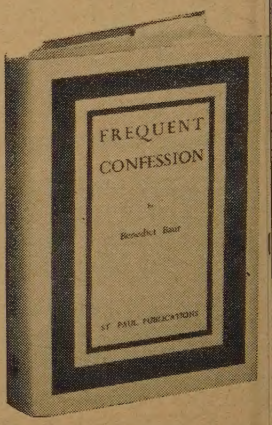

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The aim of the author is to outline the full theology of confessions of devotion, i.e., confession of venial sins and of sins that have already been forgiven. The book divides itself into two parts: part one concerns itself with clarifying the dogmatic and juridical aspects of such confessions. Part two consists of a series of meditations on spiritual subjects which will aid in making confessions of devotion more fruitful.

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PASTORAL LIFE

VOL. VIII, NO. 5 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1960

Lay Participation in the Mass

JOHN A. O'BRIEN, PH. D.

The great movement which has particularly engaged the attention of the Church during the past fifty years is the liturgical revival. Challenging the resourcefulness, insight and zeal of pontiffs, bishops and priests, it seeks to revitalize public worships. Its beginning is generally attributed to the nineteenth century work of the Benedictines of Solesmes, France, in restoring Gregorian chant.

Great encouragement was given by Pius X in his *Motu Proprio*, "The Restoration of Sacred Music," issued in November 1904. The movement's great Magna Charta, however, is the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* issued in 1947 by Pius XII. This called the liturgical revival "a sign of the providential dispositions of God for the present time and of the movement of the Holy Ghost in the Church."

What is the point most stressed in this whole movement? It is undoubtedly the need and importance of greater participation of the laity in the liturgy, particularly in its crowning act, the Eucharistic Sacrifice. "The most certain means of preserving the people from religious indifference," said Pius X, "is to give them an active role in the divine services."

With a view of assisting hard-pressed shepherds of souls in achieving that objective, we shall sketch briefly the nature of liturgy and indicate some practical methods by which the faithful may be drawn into more active participation therein. In this way, it is to be hoped, we may shorten a bit the time-lag normally occurring between the findings of scholars and the pronouncements of

authorities on the one hand and their reduction to common practice on the other.

First, let us ask: What is the liturgy? It has been used in so many senses and often so vaguely that it will be well to define it in the authoritative words of Pius XII in his *Mediator Dei*: "The sacred liturgy is the public worship which our Redeemer, the Head of the Church, offers to the heavenly Father, and which the community of Christ's faithful pays to its Founder, and through Him to the Eternal Father. Briefly, it is the whole public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members."

From this it is evident that the liturgy is essentially *corporate* worship. It involves the whole Mystical Body. For its adequate expression corporate worship requires corporate social activity: it necessitates active external participation by the laity in various ways.

DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS

"The body," the Apostle Paul tells us, "has many members, but not all the members have the same function" (Rom. 12:4). All of them, however, are called upon to play some role: no one is meant to be a passive detached silent spectator. Like cells in a living body, all have their special functions to perform, their distinctive contributions to render: none is to be a mere parasite – the ugliest form of organic life.

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Christ is the Head of the Mystical Body. All its fully initiated members have been baptized, confirmed and nourished with the Bread of Life – the Holy Eucharist. Of these, some are ordained and they *celebrate* the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The others are, as St. Thomas points out, "depicted to worship:" to *assist* actively in the rendering of corporate homage by joining with the Head, in the person of His visible minister, in offering the saving Victim to the Eternal Father.

Thus there are different functions for the ordained and the unordained. All must participate, however, if the liturgy is to disclose the true nature of the Mystical Body, of whose worship it is the vehicle. Corporate in nature, the liturgy can achieve adequate expression only when all members actively participate in the acts of worship.

This was precisely what took place in the early Church. A bishop or priest celebrated the Mass; the faithful joined with the celebrant in reciting or singing the litany (Kyrie); they listened to the Scripture reading, interspersed with psalm-singing, and to the homily following. They brought bread and wine to the altar at the Offertory and, after the celebrant dedicated these gifts in a prayer, they made it their own by adding *Amen.*

The celebrant sang the great Prayer of Thanksgiving (preface and canon – originally one prayer), during which the bread and wine were consecrated and changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Christ. Hearing and understanding it all, the faithful added their *Amen.* They came to the altar to receive Holy Communion under both species, and added their *Amen* to the concluding prayer sung by the celebrant. They departed when the deacon announced the dismissal.

From this it is evident that the faithful participated actively in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. They joined in the singing of the litany, they heard and understood every word, and made them their own with *Amens.* Alive and functional, the liturgy needed no interpretation, for all understood what they were doing and why they were doing it. The language was the living spoken language of the people. The altar was a table and the celebrant faced the people: both were linked together by a common tongue, which enabled the faithful not only to follow the prayers but also to respond to them with spontaneity and ease.

How far we have strayed from such active lay participation is evident to one who glances at the typical Mass congregation today. Detached silent spectators, the majority sit in their pews with neither missal nor prayerbook, gazing at the celebrant when not gawking aimlessly around at other members of the congregation. With his back to them the celebrant reads in silence for the most part, and when he reads aloud he does so in a language they cannot understand. There is a barrier between sanctuary and nave, a woeful lack of intercommunication between priest and people. They cannot see what he doing, hear what he is saying, nor understand the language he is using: the impasse is complete.

It is this Chinese Wall separating celebrant from worshippers which the Church is now struggling with might and main to level. The first step in that process is to make our people more clearly conscious that the chief fountain of grace is the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and they cannot tap that fountain without participating actively in the oblation. Indeed it is not only their privilege but also their obligation to do this.

"It is therefore desirable, Venerable Brethren," says Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*, "that all the faithful should be aware that to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is *their chief duty and supreme dignity* and that not in an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to distractions and day-dreaming, but with such earnestness and concentration, that they may be united as closely as possible with the High Priest, according to the Apostle, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2:5). And together with Him and through Him let them make their oblation, and in union with Him let them offer up themselves."

Here His Holiness makes clear that the basic elements of lay participation are union with the High Priest and His visible minister and the offering of oneself. This means that "all Christians should possess, as far as is humanly possible, the same dispositions as those which the divine Redeemer had when He offered Himself in sacrifice."

The ends of the sacrifice on the cross and on the altar are identical: to offer homage, praise, thanksgiving and supplication to God the Creator. The members of the Mystical Body are united with their Head when they join with His visible minister and in a

spirit of humble prayer "pay adoration, honor, praise and thanksgiving to the supreme majesty of God . . . (and) assume to some extent the character of victim" (Pius XII).

How significant it is that the celebrant immediately after the elevation of the chalice says the prayer, "*Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs, tua sancta . . . offerimus . . .*" Here is the official affirmation that the sacrifice is offered jointly by celebrant and faithful. This indicates how intimately must the worshippers be united with the priest in mind, heart and soul as the Head of the Mystical Body offers through His visible minister the saving Victim to the Eternal Father in behalf of all the members.

ALL-OUT EFFORT

No wonder it was then that Pius XII declared that "the worship rendered to God by the Church in union with her divine Head is the most efficacious means of achieving sanctity." One holy Mass, at which a person devoutly assists, offers to the majesty of the Eternal Father more homage, glory, praise, thanksgiving, supplication and propitiation than he could give to God by a lifetime of private prayer. When this is driven deeply into the consciousness of the faithful, they will be more eager not only to attend Mass but also to participate intimately in it.

It was to secure such participation that the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued its memorable directive in the fall of 1958 for the Latin rite: an all-out attack on the liturgy's central problem. One of the last liturgical actions of Pius XII was to give this his wholehearted approval. Outlining the norms for four degrees of participation in sung and low Masses, the Congregation envisions their gradual introduction in the life of the faithful.

The first two require the congregation to make part or all of the responses customarily made by the acolytes. The third degrees requires the faithful to join with the celebrant in reciting the *Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei.* Suitable only for specially trained congregations, the fourth degree requires also the recitation of some of the proper or changeable parts of the Mass. If pastors work prudently, zealously and persistently at this under the direction of their Ordinaries, they will ultimately thaw out the centuries-long frigidity and passivity of the faithful and get them really to "pray the Mass," as Pope Pius X had so often requested.

The singing of congregational hymns will also serve to lessen the passivity and detachment of the faithful. By choosing simple, easily sung hymns, which quicken the love of the worshippers for our Eucharistic Lord, shepherds of souls will gradually get them to lift their voices and their hearts in praise and homage. Pastors who have succeeded in establishing congregational singing at low Masses — usually immediately after the sermon — find that it increases devotion, kindles reflection and helps to unite the faithful with the divine Victim. It never fails to dissipate apathy and boredom: the twin evils afflicting most congregations today.

HYMNS KINDLE DEVOTION

To encourage the faithful to sing, it is helpful to scatter through the congregation some individuals who know the hymns and are able to lead. Shyness deters most people, but when they are given a little aid they gladly join in. If available, an assistant priest singing, as he walks up and down the center aisle, will encourage even the faint-hearted. It is never desirable to have a priest stand at the altar rail, flailing his arms and drawing attention away from the action at the altar. Hymn books or cards should, of course, be placed in the pews, and the title and number of the hymn can be announced or indicated by a sign displayed in the sanctuary. Once parishioners form this practice, they find it both an effective stimulant of sentiments of praise and love and an admirable vehicle of them.

The congregational singing of such simple hymns in the vernacular must not be regarded as incompatible with the liturgy. The *Mediator Dei* is explicit on this point. It states that people who "lovingly meditate on the mysteries of Jesus Christ, or perform some exercises of piety which, though different from the liturgical rites, are essentially in harmony with them" do participate in the Mass and share its fruits. The Church does not make a fetish out of any language: no tongue is an end in itself but only a means to an end.

Accustomed to congregational praying and singing, converts miss these greatly, especially the latter. A Sunday low Mass in which there is neither music nor singing seems to them extremely cold and bleak, as indeed it does to most Catholics. Listen to the testimony of a converted Episcopalian minister, Harold R. Bronk,

Jr., who was accustomed to beautiful hymns and prayers, sung and recited in common, giving a sense of corporate worship.

"With this background in mind," he says, "consider the non-Catholic as he enters a Catholic church for Sunday Mass. As he watches his fellow-worshippers – one set streaming out of church, the other in, all of them oblivious of himself and even of one another – he cannot be blamed for linking the scene to a crowded moviehouse.

"He is encouraged when the priest enters, preceded by the altar boys. Now, he thinks, the service will begin. He waits for the first hymn; it never comes. All of the great treasure of magnificent music and stirring words finds no place here. His feeling of strangeness, of unchurchliness, grows. It is not dispelled by what takes place at the altar. The priest stands at the banquet table of the God-Man and speaks with a voice that cannot be heard in a language that cannot be understood."

Here then is our problem: bring the faithful into participation in the Mass through responding to the prayers, joining with the priest in reciting the *Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei,* and through congregational singing. Never have a Sunday low Mass without some music and congregational singing.

Our present Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, is backing wholeheartedly the effort to draw the faithful into more intimate participation in the Holy Sacrifice. At a general audience in St. Peter's Basilica in June 1959, His Holiness declared that people at Mass should not be "like telephone poles," but should join with the celebrant in offering the Holy Sacrifice. Frequent and devout assistance at Mass, he pointed out, is of immense value for the individual because of the infinite merits of the sacrifice itself. God will surely bless and reward the shepherd of souls who strives zealously to get all his parishioners to attend Mass frequently and to participate in it intimately and devoutly in accordance with the mind of Christ and of His Church.

The priesthood is not . . . something. It is someone: Christ

A priestless parish is not a sick parish, it is a dead parish.

–Cardinal Suhard

The Spiritual Life of the Busy Priest

John F. Cronin, S.S.

This article is written for future bishops, for chancellors to be, and budding diocesan superintendents of education, charities, and so forth. Included as well are prospective busy pastors, hard-worked curates, and especially those priests whose primary task will be administrative. It is aimed mainly at the priest whose spiritual difficulties may stem from excessive or misdirected zeal. Many spiritual writers and retreat masters do not touch upon this problem. They aim rather at stirring up zeal, stimulating the lethargic, and spurring us on to greater efforts for Christ and His people. Or they may be concerned with the heavy burdens of the flesh, the obvious that spring so evidently from original sin. But many neglect the problems of the spirit, even though the fault of the fallen angels, of necessity, was spiritual. Nor is it unheard of that what start as weaknesses of the spirit may end with so-called grosser sins.

Even good confessors, at times, conspire to compound the dangers that can flow from excessive zeal. They may console the busy priest who notes his neglect of prayer by saying: You are doing the work of the Lord. So he is. But will his work really be *priestly* if he becomes a stranger to His Lord? Philosophy tells us that certain virtues, when carried to excess, can become vices. Zeal, ambition, and drive can be commendable virtues. But they can also get out of hand and inflict deep spiritual wounds upon a priest who seems externally to be a model of apostolic work.

Father John F. Cronin is the well-known Assistant Director of the N.C.W.C. and noted writer. The present article appeared in *The Voice.*

This usually happens because of a multitiude of small decisions. Each of these, taken separately, might well be beyond criticism. Examples of these choices are easily given. Obviously there are times when demands of duty, especially when charity is involved, will impel us to by-pass some of our devotions. A priest assigned to administrative work should not neglect his task of obedience in order to do other priestly functions, such as instructing converts. Trouble arises when a pattern of such decisions tends to narrow one's priestly interests. This is especially the case when works of zeal assume such a priority that other and more vital virtues suffer. We might examine the effect of unbalanced activity upon three major safeguards of the priestly spirit.

First, there is the matter of personal prayer. Here we refer to direct private prayer, apart from the Mass and the Divine Office. We shall not enter into current controversies about liturgy and contemplation, or mental versus oral prayer. We are not necessarily concerned with meditation as we learned it in the seminary. Prayer, as considered here, is direct, daily, and somewhat prolonged dialogue between the soul and its Maker. Normally this is mental rather than oral prayer. Dialogue does not necessarily involve many "acts" and much discourse. We can and should aspire to simpler forms of prayer. Indeed, in all humility, we should not exclude the possibility that our prayer may become contemplative.

Many busy priests find that prayer is the first casualty of imprudent zeal. Here is a typical sequence of events. The pressure of activity and worry intrudes into private prayer. It becomes dry and distracted. Because it has lost its savor, the temptation to shorten it becomes strong. Ultimately a priest may conclude that this type of prayer is incompatible with apostolic work.

If private prayer is shortened or abandoned, it often follows that a priest loses the sense of the presence of God during the day. A hurried offering of his work at the beginning of the day and a quick visit at night tend to be the only non-liturgical prayer. At this stage, it is likely that the recitation of the Office becomes rushed. There may even be a tendency to frequent recourse to canonical excuses that dispense from the Office. Finally, the Mass itself is affected. Preparation before and thanksgiving after Mass may be shortened almost to the vanishing point. Tension tends to make a

priest speed up the Mass to the point where there is little sense of deep, personal devotion and reverence.

What is the effect of all this? It is hard to be categorical, since human nature is so complex. Furthermore, the mercy of the Lord is infinite, and He must look kindly upon priests who give so much for His service, however unwisely. But often the virtual absence of prayer leads to a change of character. A certain professionalization takes place.

CHARITY AND HUMILITY

Some overworked priests follow a different pattern. In these cases, a cold, almost Kantian, sense of duty seems to take over. Work becomes obsessive, practically a form of self-punishment. Such priests say their prayers, since this is part of the pattern of duty. But their lives show little evidence of warm love of God and neighbor. They are given to burning the midnight oil and shunning all types of distractions. Common forms of priestly relaxation are classed as frivolous wastes of time. This preoccupation with duty, as distinct from a warm, personal love of Christ, also seems to affect character. There is a tendency to be severe and censorious. Sermons and confessional judgments abound in condemnations.

Perhaps there is an element of fear in this pattern, fear of God's justice, fear that any relaxation might unleash in them forces that they could not control. Because they dare not trust themselves, they take refuge in cold aloofness. And driving work gives them the self-assurance that they seem to crave.

It would not be possible in this short space to comment upon the proper type of fear of the Lord, and the balance between God's justice and mercy. But it can be noted that excessive fear betrays a lack of trust in God's grace. Holiness, after all, is not fundamentally our doing. God does the most important work. We only try to co-operate.

Both the types mentioned above probably suffer from defects in their humility. The first type described subconsciously feels that the work of the Lord will remain undone, unless he does it. He confuses quantity with quality. From a purely professional viewpoint, his work is excellent. But he might have trouble showing how much of it differs, save in motivation, from comparable work done by a layman, even an unbeliever.

In the second type, censoriousness is the indication that humility has suffered. His life may be blameless in terms of common human weaknesses. But absence of sins of weakness is no excuse for pride and criticism of others. Saints, whether their lives followed the pattern of an Augustine or an Aloysius, found in prayer overwhelming reasons for humility. The Scriptures are peremptory on the thesis that no man may glory in the sight of God.

CONFESSION AND DIRECTION

Probably both types have not used the Sacrament of Penance wisely. In some cases, the pressure of work may cause neglect of weekly confession. Independently of this, the extremely busy priest needs a special type of confessor and director, and he must have the humility to search for and to obey such a confessor. He needs a tough-minded guide who will permit no compromise in matters of prayer, charity, and humility. His director should be a saintly man who preferably has learned from experience the dangers of unrestrained zeal.

Neglect of these precautions can be harmful. The heart of the danger lies in the fact that priestly character may deteriorate seriously before anyone is aware of it. The victim himself feels that any symptoms of uneasiness are merely the price he pays for zeal in the Lord's service. Many confessors may be afraid to question what seem to be the results of apostolic generosity. Superiors may be impressed by achievement and not inclined to interfere.

Yet the priest concerned instinctively feels that something has happened. The flow of joy has gone from his work. Perhaps he may rebel against symbols of his burden, such as the unscheduled caller, the telephone call that interrupts his writing, or some assignment from authority that he considers less important than his regular work. He may want distractions, possibly even worldly associations. If he is unhappy, his health may sufer.

At this stage, he would be wise to get advice. Even if it means a trip outside the diocese, he should get an adviser who both understands his problem and is tough and unyielding in prescribing remedies. Undoubtedly, the heart of the advice he will get will concern prayer. The priest who neglected it will be told to return to his knees. The priest whose prayer has been cold and impersonal will be advised to seek a more direct and warm type of prayer.

Effective prayer by the busy priest requires two prior convictions on his part. First, he must realize that really priestly work requires close intimacy with Christ. This can come about only by regular private prayer. (We do not deprecate liturgical prayer, but only note that many do not find it spiritually self-sustaining. The Mass and Office also suffer when private prayer is neglected.)

This prayer need not be at any stated time, but it should be daily. Only the gravest emergencies should cause it to be shortened or omitted. It need not take the form of explicit meditation. Spiritual writers say that formal meditation is generally an introductory type of mental prayer, and that spiritual persons should expect to advance to a more simple and direct prayer. Nor need this prayer be before the altar: this is good, but not necessary. (See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent*, Book 3, Chapter 39.)

A second essential conviction is that prayer cannot be sustained, under conditions of driving work, without regular spiritual reading. No other practice so effectively banishes the cares and worries of a busy day and puts us in the proper frame of mind for prayer. Part of this spiritual reading should include a well marked Bible. Those who read French will appreciate the *Bible de Jeruselem.* The psalms are especially superb in this translation. (Lest we seem overly dogmatic about the absolute need for spiritual reading, the reader might consult St. Benedict, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, Father Boylan, and Dom Van Zeller on this point.)

The ideal combination is X minutes of spiritual reading, X minutes of Scripture reading, and X minutes of mental prayer *in immediate sequence.* One confessor suggests that X should equal eight or ten minutes. But after a year of faithful practice it often happens that X equals twenty minutes or longer, or a total of sixty to ninety minutes.

How to get this uninterrupted time? The administrator or teacher often has no problem. He can pray late at night or early in the morning, depending upon his office hours. The parish priest will find it harder. If early in the morning is suitable, and night hours are not too private, most rectories are quiet after the noon meal.

EFFECTS OF PRAYER

As the practice of prayer grows and deepens, certain effects begin to be manifest. Usually the first impact is upon the Mass. The priest awakens in a recollected mood. He may not at once return to the habit of preparation before Mass or extended thanksgiving afterwards. But he thinks of God as he showers and shaves, and also he prolongs his thanksgiving as he drives to the office. And his Mass is said more slowly, reverently and devoutly.

He finds unsuspected breaks in a busy day, the wait for traffic signals, the short interval between callers, the walk to the elevator (or to the parish office). His Lord is in his thoughts at these times. This helps him see God's will in the interrupting phone call, the unexpected and tedious visitor, the new assignment added to an already overwhelming load.

Next perhaps comes a change in his attitude toward the Cross. Petty vexations become opportunities to join the crucified Lord, and not just tension-building irritants. Slowly he begins to accept the Cross. Then he realizes its immense power as a channel of grace. Finally, he sees it, joined with prayer and sacrament, as a powerful instrument of sanctification. Timidly, cowardly at first, he approaches it, until one day he accepts it. Still later he may seek it.

Somewhere along the line he may improve his confession habits. They become regular. He uses the sacrament not merely for confession of sin, but also for grace for spiritual advancement. But to do this he sees the need of a regular confessor and director, so he can bring up in confession imperfections, temptations, and weaknesses, as well as regretted sins of the past. (Would that every diocese had an abundance of experienced priests available as spiritual directors and regular confessors.)

DOES THE WORK SUFFER?

As prayer permeates life, tensions decline. Outlets formerly sought as release of tension become unnecessary. Purchases of light reading become infrequent. The knobs on the television often gather dust. The newspaper takes less time to read. He finds that, in his busy life, much clutter and waste of time had intruded.

The process of detachment and uncluttering brings a surprising result. He has fitted in sixty to ninety minutes of combined prayer and spiritual reading and still has as much time for work as

before. He is much happier at his work. And he finds that the old habit of criticism has almost completely disappeared. Indeed, his repentence for the past gives him little desire to judge others.

When the Lord takes over his work, things get managed much better. A tough problem that would normally take hours seems to clear up with a phone call. People take a different attitude toward him. As they sense the priest in him, they may bring up personal problems. Before long, the hardened administrator has the consolation of doing some pastoral work.

The job gets done. Perhaps not all of it, since part of the Cross is the giving up of the idea that we are all competent. We let others do some things. We may tell some people that we simply don't have time to do all they want. (If they are bishops or religious superiors, we can frankly tell them why.) But little really suffers in our work. There is always another resource when we feel compelled to turn down a request for our time. That night we can quietly practice mortification at the table. Or we can pass up our favorite cigar. If we show Him through our penance that our charity has not grown cold, He will find a way to provide for the person whom we could not help directly. Indeed, the less credit we get for our actions, the more the Lord seems to take over.

Spiritual growth, like decline, can become cumulative. The busy pastor or administrator first recovers something of the warmth and simplicity that always charm us in the newly ordained. But, like a wine that has mellowed, he also has the advantage of experienced wisdom and sure guidance. He is a happy priest. And his bishop is more than happy that he ordained him.

THE PRIEST UNDERSTANDS

The priest is the most profoundly human of all men — the man who by his function, knows the meaning of man because he knows what is in man even before the man reveals it to him, since he is the man who knows the meaning of the moral life, the meaning of sin, the meaning of the Light and the Peace destroyed by sin. He is the man who opens the sources of happiness and the avenue to the kingdom of the Beatiudes, not by his own power but by the power which has been conferred on him.

—Father Diffine, S.J.

Sacerdotal Recruiting

Henri Blanc

"The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into the harvest." (*Matt.* 9: 37-38) This call for apostolic laborers issued by the Divine Master and always the deep concern of the Church, is still very pressing and urgent after nearly 2000 years of flourishing Christianity. In our times great missionary work has been accomplished at home and on foreign soil, particularly in the years following the First World War. Yet much remains to be done. Especially abroad in many places we have witnessed so much persecution and devastation, it is a work of spiritual recovery that confronts the Church. Unfortunately are we not facing today a crisis in matter of recruiting apostolic laborers? In other words – what of our sacerdotal vocations? Are they not on the decline or seriously threatened in some places due to prevailing materialism and licentiousness, dechristianization of the family and the school, lack of generosity in the hearts of youth? Yet there is another reason so often overlooked for our frustrations in clerical recruiting. It is the inaccurate notions which even religious instructors in charge of youths have of the sacerdotal vocation.

On this subject came to me recently a very instructive article in French by an eminent prelate, Msgr. Groult. The theme of it is the importance of a right concept of vocation for a successful sacerdotal recruiting. The writer also points out how to proceed in discussing the matter of vocation with our youths. I thought of presenting most of the contents of the article to our readers.

Even in communities duly informed on matters of religion, Msgr. Groult goes on to say, when the question of sacerdotal vocation is approached in conversation, we notice that for many the vocation would but consist in an interior and mysterious appeal. It might well be a voice which a youth has heard if not with his ears, surely in the very depths of his heart. It might also be an impulsion or inspiration so vivid, so keenly felt as to

leave no doubt that it came from the Holy Spirit. Again it could be an attraction so irresistable that the youth unmistakably sees in it a sort of instinct placed by God in his soul to lead him to the altar.

When we clarify things and explain that the sacerdotal vocation does not, at least essentially, consist in those interior experiences but in the call by the Bishop, the reaction in many youths is a keen disappointment and in some a sort of regret that they did not know it sooner. As a consequence, we meet with good Christian youngsters who would have been good priests, but since they never had consciousness of hearing that call, at no time did they discuss with themselves the problem of becoming priests.

A confused idea of sacerdotal vocation may even be found in a priest's mind. At least his attitude would give us that impression. In presenting a young man to the seminary, why should we feel the necessity of saying to the authorities: "His desire of becoming a priest comes solely from him. I never spoke to him about it." Such an attitude manifests that the sacerdotal vocation is considered as an interior appeal from God. We have no beforehand or anticipated right to a vocation. And so it happens that since the youth has not heard that appeal and does not manifest the desire of becoming a priest, we do not either talk with him of Priesthood.

THE ESSENTIAL IN SACERDOTAL VOCATION

In discussing the matter of sacerdotal vocation quite often, the first approach to the subject is to call the attention to what is not at least essential in vocation. We point out the obscurities and insufficiencies of what we designate as "interior call or appeal." Next we go on explaining in what sacerdotal vocation consists essentially, that is, in the call by the Bishop. However, as we speak of it only after discussing the various forms which the interior call they may take, would it not leave the impression that the call by the Bishop is but one more certain, a guarantee of the other, but of the same order? In reality, and this is of capital importance, the call by the Bishop is of a different order. In discussing the subject, it would be better, therefore, in the first place to draw the attention of the call from the high Church authority. As a matter of fact, after citing the words of St. Paul: "Neither does any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God" (Heb. V. 4),

the Council of Trent adds immediately: "Those only are called by God who are called by the Church, that is, by her legitimate ministers." It is indeed with the Church that Our Lord has entrusted the distribution of the graces of Redemption. And a Hierarchy established by Him presides over that distribution. The priests administer the Sacraments which Christ instituted, but it belongs to the bishops to confer upon the priests the powers of their Order, and therefore to choose those whom after ecclesiastical tests or on authorized testimonies, they judge worthy to be their collaborators in the ministry to souls. And now by which signs shall Church high authorities recognize one whom they deem worthy to be called to the Holy Priesthood? An aspirant to sacerdotal career may have heard some interior appeals from God and of which he treasures a most touching and grateful memory. But those appeals shall never be necessary, nor sufficient to motivate the Bishop's call. It must be ascertained whether or not the candidate has the qualities and aptitudes in the physical, moral, and spiritual order, such as are required by the priestly life and the sacerdotal functions. Moreover, has the young man the right motive or intention and the firm will to consecrate himself entirely and wholeheartedly to the service of God? This is the test.

WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO THINK OF PRIESTHOOD?

The first consequence to be drawn from the above theological doctrine on Sacerdotal Vocation is that in order to assume the right to think of Priesthood, an interior appeal of whatever nature is not required. Even for one who wonders if he should give a thought to Priesthood, the question is not to find out how the thought originated. Was it suggested by someone? Did it come after hearing a sermon or reading some literature? This does not matter. The important question for an aspirant to Priesthood is to know if he has the hope of being some day called by his bishop and of having the aptitudes and dispositions required for such a call. Particularly today the duties and functions of Holy Priesthood demand that long preparation which is given in our minor and major seminaries. So the call by the Bishop depends upon the testimonies received from the directors and teachers in those schools of ecclesiastical training. An adolescent who thinks of Priesthood is much like one who thinks of joining the army with

the well-founded hope of coming out of a military school with the rank of an officer. By the same token the young man who thinks of sacerdotal career, must have the well-warranted hope that, the seminary over, he will be ordained a priest. But it is a question which even an adult would dare not settle by himself alone. He will feel the need of consulting those who know more than he does the exigencies of sacerdotal life and his own potentialities as well. A child, a young man cannot dispense themselves from the advice, the counsel of those appointed to orientate them: the parents, the educators, the priest and particularly the confessor.

MENTIONING PRIESTHOOD TO A YOUTH

Have we the right or duty to talk of Priesthood with one who never gave a thought to the subject? It is of course understood that we deal with an adolescent who in our judgement based on facts and favorable reports, could be proposed for an eventual call by the Bishop. Practically, therefore, we could tell him if he would not himself consider it, to seek the advice of those who know him better and pray God for His divine guidance. Then it would belong to that adolescent to make his own decision as to becoming a priest, but only in the hypothesis that he would be sincerely willing and happy to consecrate himself to the service of God and souls.

To help a youth in his orientation through life is a mark of real affection, better still, an act of charity. And there are situations when guiding an adolescent is not only a right but a duty. Parents therefore, should be urged, whenever occasion offers, to talk with their children of the grandeur and beauty of sacerdotal life, of the need the world has of priests, to begin with their own country and perhaps their own diocese. Let also parents point out the great honor done to a family, should one of the children be given to the Church, and the magnificent grace bestowed upon the child by God.

THE DUTY OF PRIESTS

As to the priests, all should be deeply interested in fostering sacerdotal vocations, as they appreciate the divine character of their Priesthood and have a heartfelt concern over the pressing needs of the Church. Particularly priests who are in closer contact

with souls, as those engaged in parish work and those teaching in parochial schools, should consider it a duty to devote themselves to sacerdotal recruiting. Let us take the case of a priest who knows very well a youngster, as to his aptitudes and qualities, so much that he never approaches him without discerning in him all that would be necessary to become a priest. However, since the youth never manifests his desire for sacerdotal life, neither does the priest discuss the matter with him. But why does he refrain? Would it be beyond his role if with great tact and at an opportune moment, he were to bring the subject before a group of adolescents? It could run something like this: "Some of you have perhaps never given a thought to the most beautiful and noble use of your life in Holy Priesthood, but I thought of it in your behalf. Would you not accept to think of it yourselves, to consult those who know you well and to pray." So a timely suggestion or even a casual hint on the priestly vocation may be the very initial step toward the altar.

At the death of Msgr. Petit de Julleville, the great Archbishop of Rouen, they revealed the strange origin of his vocation. When he was a student in Paris, he frequently with his youthful zeal, gave help to the Chaplain of a large Catholic youth organization, Father Esquere. On the eve of a great religious feast, the priest spent many long hours of the day in the confessional box. "Poor Father!" said the student with a feeling of pity, "how exhausted you must be after hearing those kids' confessions all day long!" "Perhaps some day you yourself shall see that," replied the chaplain. That was all for the evening. Not a word from the student. He stayed mum. He walked home in deep thought. The next morning he went back to see the chaplain. "Father," he asked with an undertone of anxiety in his voice, "what did you say last evening . . . that some day I might perhaps see for myself what it means to hear kids' confession all day long? I think you were not serious, but just joking!" "Perhaps not as much as you think," said the chaplain smilingly, "I shall not be so greatly surprised if once in my life I happened to be a prophet." We know what became of the young student and it may be the story of many others. It takes so little, as a passing remark, a small incident to awaken a vocation!

IN THE MINOR SEMINARY

In the minor Seminary, the question shall not be as to whether or not the idea of becoming a priest came spontaneously to a

young aspirant or was suggested to him, but rather: Has he in him the material and the qualities required of a future priest? As we say colloquially: "Has he got the stuff in him?"

It is the duty of instructors and spiritual directors to discern among students those who in good earnest are on their way toward Holy Priesthood, and to encourage them to persevere despite momentary difficulties. As to those who are not in such definitely set orientation, they are advised not to proceed any further, regardless of contrary and enticing illusions.

When all rules as to the selection of aspirants are observed during the course of studies and when at the end of the Grand Seminary the authorities decide to present them for the Holy Orders, their decision has for the aspirants the value of an unofficial call prelude to the official call by the Bishop which shall be the call by God Himself.

In conclusion and much apropos of this subject of sacerdotal recruiting so clearly and factually brought to our attention by the French Prelate, may I quote the following guiding lines I found in a diocesan magazine from abroad:

There are vocations
That assert themselves: we must cultivate them.
That ignore themselves: we must awaken them.
That are silent: we must discover them.
That dare not: we must encourage them.
That worry: we must reassure them.
That are opposed: we must give them support.

DISTORTED PICTURE

If the priesthood of Christ is unfamiliar to most . . . the reason is, in part, that the notion of the priesthood itself is either unfamiliar or confused in their minds. The priest dictating notes in a classroom . . . ; the priest sitting at a chancery office desk . . . ; the priest at the charities office arranging the papers for the adoption of a baby; the priest waving a baton before the choir; the priest in sweat shirt training the basketball team . . . Fine as these activities may be, they are not specifically "priestly". . . . Without the power to offer sacrifice, he would not be a priest. Sacrifice and priesthood are correlative terms.

—Rev. John P. O'Connell

Enjoying the Priesthood

E. F. Garesche, S.J.

No man ought to be more full of joy in, and appreciation of, his calling than the Priest. Taken as a whole, priests are actually among the happiest men on earth, though they may not individually realize this. A good Priest, at peace with God, giving his whole life to the help and salvation of others, free from family cares and solicitudes which he has given up out of faith and hope and love, ought to be, and usually is, a very happy man.

There is a deep satisfaction in the fruitful accomplishments of the Priesthood, which no other man can know but the Priest. The desire every true man has, to do good, to have a fruitful and effective life, to help as many persons as possible, is uniquely gratified in the Priesthood. The Priest has joys and satisfactions which other men can hardly understand. His sorrows and difficulties are turned into joys and sources of satisfaction, because in his heart he wishes to suffer for Christ. This is an ideal which is realized to a great degree in every fervent Priest. But it is always possible to increase one's appreciation and joy in the priestly life. From time to time one ought to count over one's treasures, so to say, to dwell on one's blessings. The more lively and realizing is our faith, the more ardent and vivid our hope and the purer and stronger our charity, the more we shall find joy in the Priesthood.

TO CELEBRATE MASS – SOURCE OF JOY

The Priest says Mass daily. As a source of true spiritual joy, of deep satisfaction, of union with Christ, so frequently renewed, what can compare with the sacrifice of the Mass? While the Priest says Mass he unites in the offering which is so unique, so astounding, so transcendent, so infinite in its beauty, power and fruitfulness that no words can say, nor any heart measure its joyfulness and wonder. How is it possible to say Mass day after day without each time experiencing a thrill of delight? The saints hung above the

Mass like bees above a flower, sucking sweetness untold from its incredible sweetness. Some of them had difficulty, as did St. Philip Neri, in getting through the Mass at all, they were so overwhelmed with love and appreciation. It is well known that he used to read a joke book before going to the altar so that he might get at least through part of the Mass before going into ecstasy; and the server was admonished, when the Holy Father was lost in joy and wonder, to see that the candles were burning safely, to retire and close the door, and come back an hour or so later in case the Saint should have aroused himself from his ecstasy and be prepared to go on with the Mass.

Other holy men have had similar experiences. The realization of the splendor and glory of being a Priest of Christ and offering for Him and with Him the unbloody Sacrifice of the Cross, has filled them with such joy that they could hardly go on with the Holy Sacrifice. This is logical and right. It is the inevitable conclusion from the great facts of which our faith assures us, concerning the nature and efficacy of the sacrifice of the Mass. In order to enjoy the Mass one must think and pray. Only by a vivid faith can we be filled with the realization and appreciation of what Christ teaches. What we know without realizing does not move us. It is when these eternal truths become real and actual to us that they stir us to the depths.

Consider also the joy which the Priest should have in distributing Holy Communion. Here he does what Christ did at the Last Supper, but on what a magnificent scale! One Priest in a parish, during a long lifetime, can give Communion hundreds of thousands, even millions of times. As he places the Sacred Host on the tongue of one after another he says in the person of Christ that joyful prayer "The body of our Lord, Jesus Christ, keep your soul for life everlasting." He reminds himself each time that this is no ordinary bread, but the bread of Life, the Living Bread. Between his fingers, under the form and appearence of the wafer of bread, is the Eternal God-man, Body and Soul, complete in humanity and divinity.

The Blessed Mother had the unique privilege of carrying in her arms the Saviour of mankind, and of giving Him food. The Priest bears in his hands that same Saviour, but he gives Him for the food of souls, to keep them unto life everlasting. The Priest who has given one Communion on any day has performed an act

whose power and sublimity God only can fathom. How happy he should be that many times he has fed the souls of his people with the Living Bread for Life everlasting!

A Priest who gives Communion should be happy for another reason. These men and women and children who come to the altar with faith and hope to receive their Saviour as their souls' food are the salt of the earth. Each one has examined his or her conscience and made acts of faith and hope and love. It is a sublime act of faith, hope and love to approach the holy table. Therefore, as the Priest puts the Sacred Host between the lips of each communicant, he comes in close contact with one of the elect of God. These souls, clad in sanctifying grace, the heavenly wedding garment, are ripe for heaven. They are the elect, with whom he hopes for all eternity to rejoice in Heaven. The fact that they approach the holy table shows that they have struggled against the concupiscence of the eyes and of the flesh and against the pride of life. It shows that they overcome human respect, that they confess Christ publicly, and their Catholic faith. How the heart of Jesus must rejoice at the crowds that come to Communion! The heart of the Priest should rejoice likewise that he, though unworthy, is empowered to call down from Heaven this Living Bread and then put It between the lips of the faithful, in the name of Christ, while he prays for their salvation.

TO FORGIVE SIN – SOURCE OF JOY

The Priest should rejoice in hearing confessions. Physically it is wearisome. It is a strain on the hearing, on the nerves, on the mind. Unless one becomes very accustomed to it, the physical act of hearing confessions takes something out of a man. But to the eye of faith what a joyful power and privilege! To forgive sins; with a few words to make peace between the soul and its Maker; to utter that solemn and efficacious judgment "I absolve you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." I absolve you, I wash you clean from your sins. Christ, in His own person, could do this and did it many times in Galilee when He said "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." But it is the unique privilege of the Priest to share this power with Christ.

Men and women and children throng to the confessional. One by one they submit themselves to the tribunal of penance. They

have repented, they have resolved amendment. They love God and are sorry for their sins. Just as in Holy Communion the Priest is the Ambassador of Christ to give them His Body and Blood, so also in the Sacrament of Penance the words and actions of the Priest, done in the Name of Christ, give to the penitent a great increase in sanctifying grace, that gift of God that makes us holy.

We know the teaching of the Church, that there are two ways of gaining an increase of sanctifying grace. One is by personal merit and the other is through the Grace of the Sacraments. As the Priest gives Communion or absolves, or indeed administers any other Sacrament, the Holy Spirit gives to the soul a free gift of grace over and above its merits, because the act of the Priest is the act of Christ and seeing His Eternal Son feed, absolve, anoint, and so on, the Heavenly Father is moved to a generosity beyond the merits of the receiver.

How much this grace of the sacrament may be we do not know, but is must be enormously great because it is the fruit of the generosity of God given for the sake of His Christ. It may be, we do not know, that one worthy Holy Communion or Confession may enrich the soul more in sanctifying grace than months and years of personal effort and merit. Now it is the Priest who is, so to say, the channel of this grace. Acting in the name of Christ, he brings it down on the souls of men. How joyful to realize that every time he gives Communion, every time he gives absolution, he to whom he gives it will be higher in Heaven for all eternity, more glorious more beautiful, able to love God more. A million Communions, a thousand Confessions, what an increase they mean in the beauty of the choirs of the blessed for all eternity! Faith tells us this, faith that can never be falsified. As sure as God is God and Christ is Christ, the Priest by administering the sacraments nourishes the souls of his people to greater glory for all eternity.

ALL OTHER SACRAMENTS – SOURCE OF JOY

And what a spiritual joy to baptize! For in Baptism, through the action of the Priest, which is the act of Christ, the soul does not receive only an increase of sanctifying grace, it receives the grace itself in its beginning. At the moment when the Priest pours the water and says the words "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," at that instant that

soul receives the wedding garment of Heaven, the glorious quality of supernatural life which we call sanctifying grace, the gift of God which makes us holy. Thus, to bring about the second birth, the birth into life everlasting, is a special prerogative of the Priest. In case of necessity of course, anyone may baptize, but by far the greater number of baptisms in the ordinary course of things are given by the Priest.

So also for the other sacraments. They all ought to bring joy to the priestly heart. The beauty and power of the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony ought to be the object of Priestly meditation so that he may explain adequately to the young people what devotion, what mutual sympathy, what piety and zeal should characterize their married life. The Priest is only a witness of the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is the man and woman who give the sacrament one to the other by entering into the contract. But the Priest, in the name of God and His Christ, blesses and recognizes, so to say, this contract. It is a solemn and holy office. From this Sacrament spring all the Christian generations, all the future Priests and sisters and Brothers, all the fathers and mothers to come, all the strength and holiness of Catholic family life. It is the privilege of the Priest to give instructions and exhortations to prepare the bride and groom to administer and receive this holy sacrament in a worthy and fruitful way and to cherish inviolate all its obligations and duties until death do them part.

TO ASSIST THE DYING – SOURCE OF JOY

It is the Priest who is called to the bedside of the very ill to give them Extreme Unction, that mysterious and powerful sacrament which the mercy of Christ has prepared to be the strength and consolation of our last hours on earth, to console and strengthen the dying for their last judgment, to help them to make acts of the pure love of God, of faith and hope and resignation, to anoint them with the oil of salvation and sign them with the sign of the cross for their last journey. This is the singular privilege of the Priest and in this sacrament the dying Christian receives, very often, the last opportunity for a great increase in sanctifying grace. In proportion as the Priest can prepare him well he will rejoice for all eternity with new beauty, new capacity to love God in Heaven.

A pious and thoughtful Priest can thus survey all the various aspects of his vocation. Even the gathering and spending of money,

which is a heartless and cold deed in itself, can be made a warm and holy action by reason of the love of God and the love of the neighbor which prompts it. Money represents all material things and material things are indispensible for Christian living, for the service of God and of His altar. It is the privilege of the Priest to deal with the revenues of Christ.

The Catholic organizations, the movements which the Priest is called on to direct and foster, the collections for the missions, the distribution of Catholic literature, the circulation of Catholic papers, all these can become sources of joy to the fervent and realizing Priest. So may the ministry of preaching. Who, like the Priest, has such an assured audience and such a receptive and sympathetic one? The Catholics are obliged, under pain of grievous sin, to come to Mass every Sunday morning, unless prevented for serious reason. That means also that they are in effect obliged to listen to the sermon. They are the salt of the earth, they are a city seated on the mountain. In speaking to them a Priest can speak from heart to heart, knowing that they will respond to and understand the things of faith and hope and love.

So, all in all one may say that the Priest is the happiest of men, but only on condition that his life is a life of faith and hope and love. What a great incentive this is to enter into the duties of the Priesthood, to study them, to savor them and appreciate them. That way peace and happiness and merit lie.

REWARD OF FERVOR

Catholics, watching the faith and fervor with which a young priest offers the Mass, instinctively pray for him, that he may persevere to the end as their priest and shepherd. They know that the road before him is difficult and beset with danger. Their prayer is touched with pity and tenderness, for their priest belongs to them and they have a duty towards him. They pray because they know he needs the help of prayer to fulfill his high vocation, and because they know that, even as Peter and Thomas stumbled, he may fail. And what if, after some years of faithful service, he should fail? Will the prayers for him cease then? Will the pity and tenderness turn into ill will or hate? Should there be no feeling of charity for a stray shepherd?

—E. Boyd Barrett

Leakage

W. O'Donnell

Leakage is the word we use to describe loss of membership. As in all things human, there are those who slip away from the Church. In the insurance business, they call it lapsation. People buy an insurance policy under what is known as the Industrial Plan, (but more often known as the 'nickel and dime' policy) and they fully intend to keep up the payments. It is a good thing to have an insurance policy. It shows stability. Yet fully one-half of these people drop payments on the policy in the first year, and almost all drop them eventually.

In view of this carelessness about the bread and butter which the children may one day need, it is not remarkable that many people drift away from their religion. Just as the future seems far away to the people who cancel their insurance, so ETERNITY is far away from those who become lax in the practice of their faith, or who abandon it altogether. The causes of the loss are clearly set forth in Our Savior's parable of the seed that fell on various kinds of terrain. Preaching, urging, warning, is useless to some people. If they were to put into words the theory which they practice, it would be, "Look, I don't know about the hereafter, but I do know about the here. I'm going to get what I can out of life and let the hereafter take care of itself."

Much the same defense can be made of children not brushing their teeth. The logic used is this: "We don't know about the future – anything can happen." Indeed, *much* can happen, but not quite anything. Those who put eternity out of their lives, put death out of it too. They live as though they would never die. Yet if we were to ask, how do we know for sure that this person or that person will die some day? We should have a hard time

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Monsignor W. O'Donnell is Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Cleveland, Ohio.

to answer. They never died yet. There are about 2½ billion people living today – about one fourth of all the people who ever lived some estimates say; so how can we PROVE this one will die? The answer to that is as follows: "Whether I can prove it or not, I know it, and that is enough for me. I'm going to get ready for it."

So we have LEAKAGE. Observe the statistics, just in case we feel happy about the condition of our church. In 1945, there were 450,000 Catholics reported for the Diocese of Cleveland. 1959 had 750,000. Where did those 300,000 people come from? Youngstown was cut off as a new diocese, taking away 108,000. So the increase was even greater. Did these people come from an increased birth rate? Perhaps some – say, 50,000. From immigration, and refugees, from West Virginia or Pennsylvania or Alabama or Mississippi? Don't you believe it – there aren't many Catholics in those places. Well then, did we make so many converts? At Mt. Carmel we had about 150 converts in that time – 1945-59. We have about 225 parishes in the Diocese, some larger, some smaller; we are about in the middle. If the convert rate was the same all those years and in all those parishes, it would mean 33,750 converts more or less. So we have to account for over 200,000 Catholics we did not have in 1945. Well, where DID they come from? The answer is, they DIDN'T – they were here all the time, only they weren't counted, because they did not maintain contact with any parish church. They were floaters, free loaders, people who moved about a good deal, and never bothered to register. Then the Archbishop started a lot of new parishes, and the industry and enthusiasm of the more faithful brethren warmed up the chillier souls, and finally they became known to their pastors. All this is on the favorable side; that is, we have more than we thought we did.

The UNFAVORABLE side is found in the numbers taken from our own parish registers, which reflect conditions found in most places. In 23 years we had 2403 baptisms. About 10% of all babies do not survive infancy. That leaves us with 2163. At seven or eight years of age a child receives First Communion. We had but 1727. At ten or eleven a child is confirmed. We have had 1428 confirmed. It is true there are children baptized in the last seven or ten years who will receive Holy Communion and be confirmed in due time. But against that we have the fact that there were children here when the parish started, who had been baptized elsewhere, quite a few in fact. During these 23 years there were

785 marriages – 1570 people. These were married validly before the priest. That is a good sign. But 90 of those who came to be married were not yet confirmed. But they did marry validly. From a small sampling of statistics, we can make but a tentative judgment of the conditions. Yet the trend is clear. If we assume no important factors have been overlooked in making the judgment, that would disturb our reasoning, then about one-third of the babies baptized are never confirmed. One of every three. That doesn't mean they are lost to the faith. No, far from it. But it does mean serious neglect of and indifference to the spiritual life of the child, either on the part of parents, sponsors, or the person himself. All the grievances ever alleged against priests of the parish or the sisters who prepare the children in their youth, for the sacraments, will not account for so many being neglected. How close to the truth this estimate is, may be corroborated by the census taken every two years, which is a thorough, house-to-house job. The figures have been static now for a decade – of the total family units listed – two-thirds attend church with some degree of regularity. It was not that good always. In 1936 some Sundays there were as few as a hundred people at Mass, rarely were there 300. In summer, attendance fell off 50% at least. There were never more than three people who came to Holy Communion on Sunday and none during the week. Once no one received Holy Communion on Sunday. Yet for a long time now – nearly ten years – 166 receive Communion (average) daily, during the school year, and 120 in summer. It appears nothing can be done to increase the numbers – though many devices have been tried, daily confessions heard, confessions at all Masses on Sundays and Holy Days, constant attention to the many sick people, nocturnal adoration. It is what statisticians refer to as the *dead level.* One-third who never frequent the church or the sacraments – we are unhappy for that one-third, we thank God for the two-thirds, we have a *missa pro populo* every day in the year, for three-thirds.

After God, the priest is everything. Leave a parish twenty years without priests; they will worship beasts.

–St. John Vianney

The Priest and the Challenge of youth

THEODORE J. VITTORIA, S.S.P.

It has been repeatedly proclaimed that youth is essentially a test, a trial, a time of life-molding experiences, or a gamble perhaps. That it is – and even more!

"The period of adolescence is the most mysterious in life. If childhood is a riddle, then adolescence is a Chinese puzzle that invites every new generation of parents and teachers to attempt a solution," states Father Felix Kirsch, O.F.M.

Youth is mysterious because it is by nature unstable, led on mostly by spur-of-the-moment attitudes and behavior; consequently inviting of failure – very lasting ones sometimes – and struggles for hard-won rehabilitation.

But failure can offer the greatest challenge to the adolescent age!

Propelled by a heart-throbbing spirit for action, the young boy or girl experiences a kind of hopeless defeat in failure. It is here where the thought must be driven home to them that "failure may mean success" if gainfully sustained; that "sometimes a noble failure serves the world as faithfully as a distinguished success." Moreover, it is in unsuccess that youth looks for an encouraging hand to make them see the light of day in another chance to make good; to learn that failure is one of man's greatest teachers here below.

And what shall we say of the adolescent who pitifully succumbs to the test during this formative period? He has paid the greatest price: the failure of a lifetime, and maybe of eternity also.

Youth leaves its scar of battle – the symbol of successful struggle – on some; the open wounds of defeat in others.

Youth is an enigma, but a solvable one at that, because it is the dress-rehearsal for the momentous battle of life.

Shall we let it spend itself in vain to sooner or later pay its costly price? Or are the stakes too high?

Youth is a tremendous reserve of energy – for good as well as for evil. It all depends on what side is nurtured, nourished and cultivated that will ultimately determine its asset or liability to society.

The exploitation of youth by materialistic philosophies in order to further greedy nationalistic gains is the woeful verdict of years not entirely gone and forgotten. Ungodly men have channeled and harnessed a prodigious power for good to attain evil goals. Youth has been made the sorry scapegoat of many dishonest deeds.

What is past is past, but the not-too-happy reality of the present and the ominous portents of the future make it incumbent upon us (as priests) to reconsider the all-important role of youth in the diverse phases of present-day life. Perhaps the alarming and unabating tidal wave of so-called "juvenile delinquency" has been providentially instrumental in arousing not too few to a fuller and deeper realization of youth-influence in a modern world. "The destiny of any nation, at any given time, depends on the opinions of its young men," once stated the German poet and prose-writer Goethe.

"Youth is the season of hope, enterprise, and energy, to a nation as well as an individual." The innate characteristics of youth make it easily and lastingly impressible to a definite mode of moral action once this has been directed to youth tendencies for *action, heroism* and *achievement.* In turn, these very same qualities, being so inherently yielding of effects, have a natural repercussion on social life. Furthermore, youth vim and vitality are of themselves productive of opinion, thought and action.

But this energy must be early directed to a good purpose, for by the same token that youth is easily impressible to good it is naturally tempted to evil. "Every period of life has its peculiar temptations and dangers. But youth is the time when we are most likely to be ensnared. This, pre-eminently, is the forming, fixing period, the spring season, more than any other, that the character assumes its permanent course for time and for eternity." Thus, youthful energies must be oriented soon for the attainment of ideals, the instillment of virtue, and the practice of honest deeds.

Conquer youth must; conquer youth will. Not by sheer brute force, but by its indomitable will for action and achievement –

the conquering spirit of youth. To what extent do we avail ourselves of this tremendous latent power?

YOUTH'S HEART OF LOVE

Youth is the time of love — vigorous, courageous, loyal love. It is a period of overflowing self-surrender for a thing, for a person, for an ideal, for God. There's nothing as palpitating and as generous as a young heart. Truly, youths are the greatest lovers the world can ever hope to have. They form the most powerful element that can be rallied for any cause. They know no limits of sacrifice and privation — even death.

Love is the most powerful thing in the world; nothing can quite resist it. It is of its nature diffusive and all-embracing at the same time. Love gives itself; it is not bought. It is a moral force; a spiritual power that draws and captivates. It is a super-human, a divine energy — I mean true love. For love is one as God is one. Love is love's reward.

The greatest lovers are the greatest doers. Christ came into this world to teach men how to love and do it in a big way. "No greater love hath any man . . ." To be sure, He was the greatest Lover the world ever had, and no man even dared approach in doing what He did. The world needs lovers; it needs lessons in love.

If youth's heart is the seat of chaste and undefiled love, of divine love, why can't we shield these flaming hearts from the gusts of worldly winds which seek to put them out? This flame is the light of the world and the hope of mankind. Only the pure hearts of youth can rejuvenate and revivify. Youth wants to love — strongly to believe and resolutely to act. Youth! What an unchallengeable force in the ranks of the Church! What a powerhouse of sanctification and spiritual revival! For is not love the measure of grace? "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God."

A BELIEVING, LIVING YOUTH

It was the realization of this distinctive asset in youthful vigor and vitality that prompted our Holy Father to utter a ringing challenge to the young people of our day, when he said:

"Youth must believe . . . Youth must be a living youth, as the

Church is a living Church; alive not only because it works for the solution of the problems of the day, and for the men who live today on earth. This is why the Church and youth have always felt close to each other . . . Youth must be holy in its prayers and purity, a youth without fear or reproach, that is to say, without fear because it is without reproach. The pure heart of youth can thus look any man or event face to face, and death itself and above all, God, Who knows all."

Pope Pius XII offered the greatest challenge ever when he added: "Catholic youth is as active as the Church itself! . . . The future belongs to youth, but to that youth which will have known how to conquer and dominate it."

Also vastly aware of this fact was the great Cardinal Newman, when he wrote: "Youths need a masculine religion, if it is to carry captive their restless imaginations, and their wild intellects, as well as touch their susceptible hearts."

The world will always need love and lovers. It will always need youth to teach it how to love!

TRAINING IN SELF-MASTERY

"Take is easy," is the common gibberish these days. We can't quite imagine a champ boxer failing to take the gruel of pre-bout workout. Nor an undefeated football squad neglecting exhausting field practice and still maintaining the lead. Every experienced coach knows that training makes the athlete—the spiritual as well as the physical one.

We are a bit over-concerned in our day about removing obstacles and challenges, while directing adolescent energy along the proverbial line of least resistance. That's hardly preparing one for the realities of this earthly sojourn.

Life is not a matter of coasting downhill, picking flowers along the way, or meeting people who have sympathy for our failures and smiles for our little successes. It's not that imaginary. I often like to think of it as a football game – employing strategy, charging the line, fumbling the ball, recovering it, biting the dirt, making hard-won yardage, losing ground. And all this demands training to make it a winning game.

It's not too much different in the spiritual field: sin is always presenting an attractive side; temptations never cease to make a strong case; passions cost many a struggle and sacrifice; religious practices generally seem burdensome; powers are aligned against us for crucial battle. This is where spiritual athleticism comes to challenge youth's toughest grit.

Some are of the oft-repeated notion that religion has to be diluted to appeal to the modern boy or girl. This could well be one of the main reasons why teenagers show sluggish and shiftless response to such parish-club appeals as juke-boxes, dances, parties, socials, and other forms of come-on. Young people will soon find out for themselves where they can get "the mostest and the bestest." Surely, it won't be a parish hall!

It seems that we are often in a quandary as how best to direct youthful energies along spiritual channels. Some zealous pastoral souls frankly wrack their brains to get the teens on the active parish list. One such young priest found an effective solution: "We have parish dances and all sorts of social activities, but the one thing that binds the club together is the weekly reception of Holy Communion and the gang loves it."

Any substitute for the challenge of the Christian personality will prove futile in the training of youth. Christ is still the greatest attraction for every boy and girl. They want the challenge of the saints!

"Young men want real manly virtue; they want to be good-living Catholics, but with all the virility of 'outlaws.' They want to be saints — of course they do — but they have to be challenged with saints who were human beings as well as saints, hardly the type depicted by many of our holy pictures and biographies. They want their saints to be heroes with manliness — but this was the characteristic of all men saints, often not presented to them in this light, thereby lowering sanctity in their estimation. Our young men will never be won to Christ by 'soft-soaping' religion; they must be challenged to measure up to the standards of Christ and His saints." This was the experience of Brother Lawrence Ephrem, F.M.S., at Marmion Military Academy, Aurora, Ill.

This is the challenge for every priest engaged in the all-important apostolate of youth.

quid in casu?

Is it still good doctrine to teach that our reason can prove the existence of God?

The *Council of the Vatican,* in its third session, April 24, 1870 held that God, the beginning and end of all creation and of all things can be known with certitude by the natural light of the human intellect by means of created things. *Modernists* in the early 1900's held that the traditional proofs for proving the existence of God were worthless and that only one's own inner experiences were held to be a safe and a true guide. "*Humani Generis*" (Aug. 12, 1950) condemned the new theology which affirms that human reason, without the aid of divine revelation and grace, is useless and powerless to demonstrate, by argument from creation, the existence of a personal God. Recently, the Holy Office condemned the books of one Abbe Dunery which held the same thesis. In resume, let us remember that our reason can prove the existence of God; that reason can be enlightened by grace, and the gift of faith will press the entire human person to unite to His God as Sovereign Good, Truth, and Beauty in such a way, that the person cannot ignore God, any longer, as his *personal* God and Good.

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What is there in Holy Water that makes it holy?

Water that is blessed is so because of a *constitutive* blessing. Its blessing is *not* simply *invocative.* Water, an inanimate thing, acquires a special power from this blessing or consecration: it is set aside for spiritual purposes; the Church asks God through it to attain certain efects; in fact, it represents the impetration and intercession of the Church for favors for those who use it properly. This impetration, from the part of the Church, is always there, but the effects will be had only *ex opere operantis.* Therefore, because of

all the fore-mentioned qualities, Holy Water has a relative holiness from the religious significance the Church has impressed upon it. Some theologians claim that it produces its effects *ex opere operato* (this follows from the ever-present impetration of the Church); but actually its value will depend on the dispositions of those who use the water, according to the more reasonable opinion.

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I have read that a person may be a member of Christ and yet not a member of the Mystical Body. How can this be?

Pius XII in his wonderful encyclical on the "Mystical Body" reaffirmed the identity of the latter with the Catholic Church. He also recognized a certain alloy of sanctity in Christian communities outside the Catholic Church. We must, therefore, conclude that if this sanctity exists outside the Church, then, the grace of God must come to those outside the Church for it is only through His grace that Saints are made. This latter deduction has always been doctrine of merit in the Church for Pius IX clearly stated this as an indisputable fact. (Denziger 1677). But all grace in the New Law, as well as had been the case in the Old Law, comes to us through, and because of Christ; and in Christ are incorporated those who accept that grace. This is perhaps what was meant by a 'member of Christ'. The C. of Trent spoke in these terms (Sess. VI,c.16).

But, how can one be a member of Christ and yet not a member of His Body, the Church? The Pere Terrien in his book 'L'Eglise, Corps de Christ' p. 331-332 answers in this fashion: all the Saints have known the Church, and have been of the Church, at least, *interiorly* but all have not belonged to it *exteriorly*. The Holy Spirit, because of the good will on the part of such souls, worked in them by *extraordinary* means and made them members of the Church in an invisible fashion; and through this Church incorporated them in Christ. This was done for them because if they knew the ordinary means, then, they themselves would have embraced those means of salvation. They belong to the *soul* of the Church for they have the roots of supernatural life and the riches of sanctifying grace; and this supernatural life is not possible unless the person is somehow a member of the Church; for every grace given by God today, after the Re-

demption of Christ, is given as an attractive force toward the Church, pushing to union with it. Such good souls are not present in body to the Church through any fault of their own; but in their hearts and in their good will they do belong 'somehow'. Pius XII in his cited encyclical tells us that they are 'unsuspectingly related to the Mystical Body of the Redeemer in desire and resolution; but they still remain deprived of so many precious gifts and helps from heaven, which one can enjoy only in the Catholic Church . . . may they then enter into the Catholic unity, and united with us in the organic oneness . . .' (paragraph 100 NCWC translation).

We begin to see that one may be a member of Christ (by grace) and yet not a member of the Mystical Body 'organice'.

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Is a dispensation granted for an impediment of marriage valid even after the death of the Ordinary who issued it, and before it was actually used?

Yes. Once a dispensation is granted, the impediment ceases here and now. It is given to the two people who are to marry and not to the marriage itself; therefore, its effects are not suspended until the marriage takes place. It is given in *forma gratiosa,* i.e., the mere execution of the rescript is all that is asked of the one of whom it is sent.

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I am a diocesan priest and wonder if I may use my Ordo when I say Mass for cloistered nuns from time to time?

Most likely you may not; for without doubt, the cloistered Nuns are affiliated with an exempt male religious Order and must follow the ordo prescribed for that religious family. The only time you may use your own ordo would be when the religious ordo calls for votive Masses — then you are free to choose from your own calendar.

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We have had an argument about original sin being transmitted via concupiscence in the marital act. Some deny this and others affirm it as having been taught them in theology. Which is it?

Studying the history of this question, one is struck by the names of the prominent theologians who in the past did teach the transmission of origi-

nal sin by linking it to concupiscence and the latter as a necessary adjunct to the marital act. The Dictionaire de Theologie, XII, 450 gives a summary of the opinions up to the 12th century in the following words "the instrument of propagating original sin is concupiscence which accompanies generation." The body was looked upon as soiled by concupiscence and the soul via contact with the body.

It was St. Anselm who changed the current of theology in this respect by insisting on the theory that we inherit original sin *by our simple birth* into the human family, whereby we fall under the universality of sin and its redemption by Christ. St. Thomas shared this view. Today this theory alone prevails. All are agreed that original sin is inherited by the sole fact of human generation and the role of concupiscence is not even mentioned, much less acknowledged as the vehicle of transmission. We hope it is clear that the above were simply explanations of a dogmatic fact. There was never any doubt that original sin was inherited. There was a dispute as to the manner. Perhaps one of the movements that brought about this change in theory was the Reformation. The pessimism of the Reformers exaggerated the corruption of the nature of man and this motivated a movement in the Church to emphasize the doctrine of original justice: man in the state of original justice was in the friendship of God, wholly submitted and directed to God, his supernatural goal. Man's appetites were completely under the rule of reason and there was peaceful harmony, equilibrium in man, body and soul. After the fall of man, it was no longer possible for man to reach the supernatural by himself; and in him there is no longer that harmony; instead disorder reigns in the appetites of man.

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Could you give me the principal points of Mariology as they stand today? So much is written and so many different opinions expressed, it makes one a little uneasy. I do not know where to start in the study of the question.

In the field of dogmatic theology, Mariology is the most discussed topic. That seemingly there are exaggerations in this field, we cannot deny; and the uneasiness, felt by so many, leads to indifference to all the beauty to be found in the rich doctrine on the prerogatives of Mary and Her place in the plan of Redemption. Today, there is

no disagreement as to Mary's *privileges* and *prerogatives*. All are in accord on that point. Her *active role in the Redemption* of Mankind brings forth all the polemists. That Mary cooperated in the work of the Redemption is certain. *Some* theologians claim for her a *direct* share in the meriting of our redemption. They would see Mary as meriting the entire grace of the redemption under, and in Christ as a secondary, accidental, conditionally-necessary instrument. In the work of the Redemption there would have been a double decree: one by which Christ would have redeemed Mary alone; and then by another all the rest of mankind redeemed through Christ, and with the help of Our Lady who had already been established in grace. (Roschini, Dillenscheider, M. J. Nicolas). *Others* contend Mary could not have done this as she herself had to be redeemed by Christ. They decry the double decree theory. Besides, they add, Her merits would have been superfluous since the merits of Christ are more than abundant. They would permit Mary to share in the *distributing* of the graces of the Redemption but *not in the meriting* of them. (Goosens, Lennerz). *Thirdly*, others picture Mary as accepting the work of the Redemption in the name of mankind

What is the fundamental principle of Mariology? i.e. the fundamental truth to which all others can be reduced and from which they can be understood more fully? Traditionally, it is Our Lady's Maternity, and this avails Mary of all her privileges and prerogatives. *Scheeben* adds that it is Mary's personal character as Spouse and Mother. *Roschini* holds that Mary, as Mother of God as well as of men, is the recipient of those privileges. A new trend is to seek the principle in Mary's *relationship to the Church*: Mary as the prototype of the Church (saving and saved — which receives and communicates salvation). Finally, some find the fundamental truth of Mary's privileges *in herself* as the most perfectly and most intimately subject sharing with Christ; as the most perfectly redeemed by divine grace. In other words, Mary is the most perfect and most personal realization of God's entire economy of grace and the climax of salvation.

As we see it there are two currents of thought: one seeks to make Mary an independent autonomous theological category; another sees Mary in function only of something greater

– as a part of the whole of the work of Redemption which belongs to Christ alone.

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May the candlesticks on the main altar be of uniform height?

The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* decrees that the candlesticks should not exceed the base of the crucifix in height and that the six candles on the high altar should be of various heights, the tallest nearest the crucifix. However, the Sacred Congregation ruled that the decree was not obligatory and thus the candlesticks of uniform height came into use.

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If the feast of the day is transferred to some other date, is the Missa pro populo transferred too?

C. 339 n. 3 (339 n. 3) states the Missa pro populo is to be applied the day on which the feast is celebrated *only if* the precept of attending Mass and abstaining from servile work is to be observed on the day of transfer. Otherwise, the Missa must be applied on the day of the feast itself.

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IS BIRTH CONTROL PILL MORAL?

A theologian had described as "diametrically opposed to Catholic teaching" a doctor's suggestion that a pill which suppresses ovulation might be morally acceptable to Catholics.

Father John J. Lynch, S.J., professor of moral theology at Weston College, made the statement in commenting on remarks attributed to Dr. John Rock, who has done research on the pill at Harvard University.

Dr. Rock was quoted by newspapers as having said at a meeting of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology that the pill acts in a natural way to prevent ovulation and therefore could be acceptable to the Church as a birth control technique.

However, Father Lynch commented that "the use of any drug for the purpose of inhibiting ovulation in the human female is patently a form of contraceptive sterilization and hence contrary to moral law as understood and defended in Catholic theology."

Father Lynch's statement was issued in response to a request from Msgr. Donald A. Mc-

Gowan, director of the Bureau of Health and Hospitals, National Catholic Welfare Conference, and national moderator for Catholic Physicians' Guilds.

Dr. Rock was reported to have said that the pill reproduces the effect of a hormone naturally produced at certain times in a woman's body to prevent ovulation.

According to reports, he said the pill has been on the market for some time as a prescription remedy for menstrual disorders. In the last several years, he said, he has done research on the contraceptive uses of the pill, and has found it "100 per cent effective" if used according to instructions.

In his statement, Father Lynch commented that "physiologic control of fertility as described by Dr. Rock is no less a species of artificial contraception than are the more familiar chemicals and physical devices used to prevent the union of ovum and spermatozoon."

Drugs and medicines for this purpose "have their legitimate medical uses, but deliberately induced sterility is not one of them." he said.

Father Lynch declared that "no competent moral theologian would hesitate for an instant" in reaching the same conclusion on the matter, which was "confirmed" by the late Pope Pius XII in an address to the Seventh Congress of the International Society of Hematology.

In that address, delivered September 12, 1958, Pope Pius said the answer to moral questions about the use of such medicines "depends on the intentions of the person."

He continued: "If the woman takes the medicine, not to prevent conception, but only on the advice of the doctor as a necessary remedy because of the condition of the uterus or of the organism, she provokes indirect sterilization which is permitted according to the general principles governing acts with a double effect.

"But a direct and, therefore, illicit sterilization is provoked when the ovulation is stopped so as to protect the uterus and the organism from the consequences of pregnancy . . . ."

In cases where "a medical symptom" or other causes make conception "undesirable," the Pope added, "the use of medicines has as its end the prevention of conception by preventing ovulation."

"Therefore, it is a question of direct sterilization," he said.

(*N.C.W.C. News Service*)

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pastoral Reflections

A PRIESTS' PRIEST

One of the finest tributes that can be spoken about a priest is that he is a priests' priest. This unofficial title, yet highly significant tribute, means that a priest is interested in his brother priests in a truly constructive way, and that he is concerned about raising up spiritual children to continue his work.

Actually, every priest should be the inspiration and occasion of many boys deciding to become priests. If more priests were really interested in continuing their priesthood, if their zeal and enthusiasm could not be concealed, then this radiance of vocation would attract many more boys to follow the calling of callings, to be a priest, and in deed a priests' priest.

One priest many years after his ordination was asked by a boy in religion class what it was that made him want to become a priest. He did not have to hesitate a moment for the answer: "The pastor of our parish when I was a boy made me want to become a priest."

Another priest, as he offered up a weekday Mass some years after his ordination in the chruch of his boyhood reflected that his vocation was born on the steps of that very altar. As he later said to a priest classmate of his, "When I turned around at the Dominus Vobiscum, and my eyes rested on the server kneeling there in my old place, the same place where I knelt as a boy, I recalled how from that very spot I looked up with admiration to my old pastor and said to myself, I want to be a priest like you."

Another place where a priest shows himself to be a priests' priest is when he is called upon to be a brother priest's confessor. He is not abashed. He is not curt and brisk. He is genuinely helpful.

We might attain fame in one or other line, but we could covet no better distinction than to be known as a priests' priest.

THE COUNSELOR

In older spiritual books we read much of spiritual direction. Nor has the need for it passed. Perhaps, if anything, there is greater need now than in ages past.

We hear more today, however, of counseling than of spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is, of course, counseling, although not all counseling is spiritual direction. Indeed much of present-day counseling is on the purely natural plane, and has a purely pragmatic even secularistic motive. There is, however, spiritual counseling. That is the kind we priests are called upon to practice.

Modern people have been taught to seek and to accept counseling in one or other form. It has its place in education, in business, in the armed forces, well just about everywhere. Our people know about it. They believe in it. They seek it when they come up with a problem or a decision to make.

We priests in the active ministry are being expected to spend more and more time in spiritual counseling. People are mixed up. They have to talk over their problems with someone. If their problem borders on the spiritual, they seek out the priest for counsel.

There is such a need for spiritual counseling today, that any priest who has a sympathetic ear for people with problems will have a line waiting at his door.

Not every priest is so good at counseling as to have a steady clientele. But any priest, yes, every priest must be willing to be a spiritual counselor when the occasion arises. Nor should he send everyone away to some supposed expert. Often he is the one best qualified to handle a local case. He may not be a professional psychologist, but he is a priest, and he does have the grace of office, and he can and must advise his people.

We modern priests just have to accept the fact that counseling is now one of our routine duties. We have to face up to this important responsibility, and use counseling, as it is, a tool for saving souls.

PREACH DAMNATION

We priests get on dangerous ground when we pick and choose what doctrines to emphasize, what others to minimize. We can become a kind of heretic by silence, by just not mentioning certain unpopular doctrines. Eternal damnation in hell is one such touchy subject. There is just not enough of preaching on hell nowadays.

What our people need today, particularly our young people, is to be scared by the prospect of going to hell. The love of God alone is certainly not keeping them from serious sin. The fear

of hell is needed, and needed badly.

Of course, we all ought to keep out of sin for love of God. But even saints subsequently canonized felt the need of meditation on hell. If our love of God is not strong enough to keep us from offending God seriously, then the thought of hell will help put the fear of the Lord into us.

Some of our people will possibly lose their souls because we have neglected to give them the powerful motivation of the fear of an eternal hell. We may have failed to give them the very tools of salvation.

Who can continue to commit mortal sin when he is vividly aware that if he died right now he would be tortured in hell forever? The reason he can feel so at ease to sin grievously is because he is shutting his mind to the thought of hell. We have to make our people think about hell, and consequently to fear it in a practical way.

It is our duty as priests to teach all the doctrines of Christ, and in their proper proportion and perspective. Did Christ neglect to warn about hell? He did not. Neither can we afford to gloss over this powerful motivation for keeping the faithful to a just God.

T. C. Siekmann

"THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT"

They are not scornful, the men of this modern world; they simply do not comprehend, and it is doubtful whether anything may lawfully be supposed to exist which they cannot comprehend. Now their ignorance may become our guilt if we do not strive to enlighten them. Ours is the glorious duty to grasp the opportunity to teach them. This we owe to God and to ourselves. Dainty members of a thorn-crowned Head, woe to us if we renege our duty to be the advertisers of the House of Christ, and of Him crucified. Woe to us if we are caitiff cowards ever ready to barter away the Truth as we see it. Woe to us if we fail to face the Fact that the human soul being "naturally Christian" has an instinctive craving for Christianity. It is true that none but God can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul; that as the heart was made for Him, so He only can fill it. But, with His help, try we must, triumph we may.

—FATHER LELEN

BOOK-REVIEW Selections

MORALITY AND THE HOMOSEXUAL, *by Michael J. Buckley, D.D.* 214 *pp.* $3.50. *Newman Press, Md.*

This is the only Catholic book devoted exclusively to the subject, and is fundamentally a contribution to pastoral theology. It has a twofold aim: first, to equip the priest, particularly the confessor, with a deeper understanding of the causes and the nature of this psycho-sexual disorder; and, second, to provide the priest with practical guidance at all relevant points in his dealing with the problem, and in evaluating both the guilt and degree of responsibility in the homosexual. In the light of the evidence and the results of present-day investigations, the author attempts to lay down principles on the basis of which the individual's responsibility for his condition and practices can be determined. Finally, Father Buckley discusses the attitude of the priest toward the homosexual, the kind of guidance he should provide, and the relationship which should exist between himself and the doctor or psychiatrist in the treatment of the homosexual. The entire subject matter is treated with objectivity, scrutiny, sincerity and priestly compassion.

THAT THEY MAY SHARE — A MASS COMMENTARY, *by Rev. Alfred C. Longley and Rev. Frederick R. McManus, J.C.D. Benziger Brothers.* 269 *p.*, $9.50

That all may share in the offering of the eucharistic sacrifice to God — this is the purpose of the comments and exhortations prepared for this book and planned for reading by a "commentator" at holy Mass on the different days of the Church year.

There are many ways by which men may be moved to take a holier part in Catholic worship. One way is through brief observations made by a priest other than the celebrant or by a layman during the course of the Mass, the adminis-

tration of the sacraments and other rites of public worship. For better or worse, the one who performs this office is called a "commentator" – although his purpose is primarily to exhort and to lead the faithful rather than to explain sacred rites.

The practice has always been a legitimate one and the office an important one. A new encouragement to the practice, in a form developed gradually over the past few years, was given on September 3, 1958, when the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued an important Instruction on the subject of congregational participation in sacred worship. And the official description of the commentator's role suggests at once his twofold function: (1) to indicate the parts the texts of the service; and (2) to lead or direct the congregation singing or praying.

The plan of this book provides a text for the commentator to recite at the appropriate times at holy Mass, with a clear indication of the moments when the different texts are to be used. Simple as this plan may be, it is still necessary for the commentator to appreciate the meaning and requirements of his office--and to understand how he is to direct the congregational praying or singing, whatever the kind of active participation that may be followed at Mass.

(from the Introduction)

APOSTLE AND APOSTOLATE *by Msgr. Lucien Cerfaux. Desclee Co.,* 184 *pp.* $2.75.

The renowned Biblical scholar, Msgr. Lucien Cervaux, in this book offers workers in the Apostolate– priests and laymen –a code of spirituality, by which one may re-examine the practice and conception of the true apostolate. Our Lord gave His Apostles a set of instructions for mission work in Galilee, which instructions are found in the Gospels, especially in St. Matthew. The author rightly argues that this is the pattern which must be reproduced by the apostles of all times, in order to bring lasting fruits for the glory of God and the salvation of our fellow men.

"The pages," says the author in the Introduction of the book, "have one ambition: to nourish with the word of the Gospel the beginnings of all those projects, methods and activities which are consecrated to the spread of the Kingdom of God."

A truly useful book for the busy apostles of these feverish times, where too often too much

noise drowns the words and grace of God.

John Auricchio, S.S.P.

HOW THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS GOVERNED, *by Heinrich Sharp. Herder and Herder, New York,* 167 *pp.* $2.75

The purpose of this book is to explain briefly the government of the Church, the origin and significance of her congregations, offices and law courts. The author illustrates the positions of the Pope and Cardinals, the election of a new pope and his daily life, and how the Vatican, which imposes no taxes, manages to support itself financially.

The author has spent many years in Rome as a newspaper correspondent and thus is able to tell with many fascinating details how the oldest form of government existing in the world functions.

John Auricchio, S.S.P.

WITNESSES OF THE GOSPEL *by Henry Panneel; translated by Paul A. Barrett, O.P. Herder Book Co.,* 192 *pp.* $3.75.

Without departing from the traditional and orthodox interpretations of the Gospels, Henry Panneel has written a book which portrays the life of Christ in an original and vital fashion. The principal episodes in the life of Jesus, from Bethlehem to Calvary, are narrated by persons who participated in these events. By supplying details which are not recorded in the Gospels, the author breathes such vitality in the various witnesses that their testimony achieves a startling realism.

Each chapter represents a particular episode in the life of Christ as seen and experienced by some person who was actually there. Not only is the actual event recorded, but the witness describes his own personal reaction to it. As a result, the book as a whole is not only a life of Christ, but a study of religious psychology, showing the impact of Christ on the persons who listened to His doctrine and witnessed the events of His life.

(From the flap-page)

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ART OF LIVING, *by J. A. O'Driscoll, S.M. B. Herder Book Co.,* 127 *pp.* $2.35.

The artistry applied in Christian living is the highest of which man is capable. It is fos-

tered by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which unfortunately many people regard as mere embellishments of the spiritual life and of little practical importance except perhaps to souls who have received a high state of sanctity. The truth is that the Gifts are necessary to the salvation of all men, and the Christian must depend upon them constantly, if he is to succeed in his imitation of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the soul of the Church; and His influence, by His inspiration, on the members of Christ's Mystic body is profound and far-reaching.

It is probably failure to see the difference between the Gifts that explains why even very religious people devote comparatively little attention to them and think of them as a cloud, bright perhaps, but obscure and overshadowing nevertheless.

The following pages outline the fundamentals of the subject. They treat of the formative work of the Gifts and show the kind of help needed in various circumstances by those who take Our Lord as their model. The realization of one's needs is an important step towards an increased sense on Him Who alone can conduct men through the right way.

(Forward of the book)

THE OPEN HEART *by Victor Houart. Souvenir Press London, Taplinger Publishing Co., New York,* 202 *pp.* $3.95.

This book is a well-written life of the famous Father Pire, the Nobel Prize Winner, and of his marvelous work among the thousands of D.P.'s, the unfortunate derelicts of the Second World War and refugees from Communist tyranny. It is truly an inspiring tale of the heroic Belgian Dominican priest and his amazing work. Today, in fact, the movement that the great Dominican founded to help the poor victims of war and despotism, *The Europe of the Heart,* is busily building whole villages for the human flotsam and jetsam floating on the tidal waves of modern godless chaos.

"*The Open Heart* tells this inspiring story with compassion and with insight. Victor Houart, himself a Belgian, lived and worked closely with Father Pire and his family while writing the book. He has seen the war as an R.A.F. fighter pilot and then he saw the great and loving work of a lone priest and he now understands a little more than he did before about how to love his fellow man, and about what it means to have an open heart."

John Auricchio, S.S.P.